

# **Exhibit “C”**

1/27/2019

Airmont residents question 2,000-student religious school plan

## Airmont residents question 2,000-student religious school plan

Michael D'Onofrio, [mcdonofrio@lohud.com](mailto:mcdonofrio@lohud.com) Published 7:04 a.m. ET Feb. 2, 2017 | Updated 10:06 a.m. ET Feb. 2, 2017

Central United Talmudical Academy of Monsey's plan for expanding to educate 2,000 students is raising objections from Airmont neighbors. [lohud](#)



Buy Photo

(Photo: Seth Harrison/The Journal News)

[CONNECT](#) [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#)

**AIRMONT** - The expansion of a religious school in the village has galvanized residents' opposition against what they see as an unsustainable development endemic throughout Ramapo.

Standing along Cherry Lane on a sunny weekday morning near where a Satmar religious school could soon be expanded to educate 2,000 students,

resident Scarlett Mangeri said neighbors were uniting to prevent the proposal they believe was inconsistent with the residential character of the neighborhood and would stress village infrastructure to the limit.

"The residents here are fed up," said Mangeri, 37. "We're fed up of being bullied. We're fed up with taxes being increased."

Central United Talmudical Academy of Monsey has put forth an estimated \$20 million proposal to build separate boys and girls schools at 236 Cherry Lane, said Steven Barshov, a lawyer for the academy.

**SPECIAL REPORT: Ramapo nears a breaking point**

**READ: What Albany has and hasn't done in Ramapo**

Central UTA has outgrown its current schools in Airmont, Barshov said, which opened four years ago. Student enrollment — now at about 800 — is expected to balloon to 2,000 students by 2020.

"They need expanded schools in order to accommodate the population growth of students," Barshov said. The new school, he added, will "accommodate growth over approximately the next 10 years."

1/27/2019

Airmont residents question 2,000-student religious school plan

The proposal has been submitted to the village's Community Design Review Board and has yet to be presented to the Planning Board.

## The proposal

Central UTA purchased the 22-acre site, which was the former location of Camp Regesh, in August 2016.

The girls school is currently operating there, while the boys school is run out of a leased building in the village.

Students at the site could be seen on a recent school day entering and exiting a one-story building on the property. There were also multiple modular units set up.

Central UTA proposes constructing two, three-story buildings on the property: One for boys and another for girls.



From left to right, Airmont residents Rick Klev, Anthony Vertullo, and Scarlett Mangeri, say a proposed religious school at 236 Cherry Lane is too big for the area. (Photo: Michael D'Onofrio/The Journal News)

The 73,000-square-foot buildings would include 44 classrooms for 1,000 boys and 1,000 girls in pre-school through ninth grade and under the age of 16.

The buildings would be constructed in phases, Barshov said. The goal is to have the boys school ready for the 2018-19 school year.

Female students would continue to use the current facilities during the first phase of construction. Barshov said he expected the second building for girls to be completed within five years.

An estimated 80 buses would transport students to and from the property on a staggered schedule between 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., according to village documents.

### MAP: Proposed school expansion

Mangeri — who was joined by fellow residents Anthony Vertullo, 53, and Rick Klev, 48, on Wednesday morning — said neighbors questioned how 2,000 students, or the

1/27/2019

Airmont residents question 2,000-student religious school plan

equivalent of nearly a quarter of the village's population, would affect Airmont's sewer systems, utilities and other infrastructure.

Cherry Lane is a two-lane road lined with homes. The site is adjacent to the Town of Ramapo's Camp Scuffy, and near Cherry Lane Elementary School, which has a student population of approximately 328.

Residents raised concerns about how the narrow road could accommodate so many buses.

"It's just too massive. It's not right for this area," Vertullo said.

The Tallman fire department recommended, among other things, widening Cherry Lane by at least 12 feet with curbing and sidewalks along the entire property to assure emergency access and alleviate anticipated traffic congestion, according to comments submitted to the village about the proposal.

"Any project that is going to have a substantial impact on the infrastructure of the community needs to go through the proper process, as far as the planning board, zoning board," Mayor Philip Gigante said.

#### SPECIAL REPORT: NY religious property tax breaks soar heavenward



Airmont resident Scarlett Mangeri says neighbors were uniting to prevent Central UTA's proposal to expand a religious school on Cherry Lane to 2,000 students. (Photo: Michael D'Onofrio/The Journal News)

The neighbors added that in a village and county where taxes were already notoriously high, the steady rise of tax-exempt properties built to accommodate the rapidly expanding ultra-Orthodox and Hasidic communities unfairly shifted the burden onto others.

"As the community changes and the tax base increases, yet the houses that are contributing to that tax base are diminishing, which in turn makes everybody else's taxes to go up," Klev said. "At the end of the day, it's not sustainable."

### Zoning moratorium

Central UTA's proposal comes at a time when the village is seeking to suspend all development for six months.

Airmont looks to follow other Rockland municipalities, such as Montebello, that have implemented temporary building moratoriums in order to update zoning and building codes, Gigante said.

"It's prudent for municipalities to make sure that their zoning laws are up to date," the mayor said.

The moratorium, which is expected to go before the village board for a vote this month, will block all residential and non-residential developments. Village boards continue to have "difficulty interpreting our code" when it comes to building proposals and are silent on numerous issues, Gigante said, such as fast-food restaurants. And anything not prohibited in existing code is legally permitted.

"If the law is silent on a certain issue, the boards must rule in favor of the applicant," Gigante said.

The mayor said Central UTA's proposal would not be affected by the moratorium.

1/27/2019

Airmont residents question 2,000-student religious school plan

In addition, Barshov said the proposal does not need any variances because the site is zoned for school use.

"Because this property is already zoned, my hope is that we'll have a review that is appropriately limited to the actual issues before the Planning Board, which are site-plan related," he said.

Twitter: @r-nikedonofrio